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Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

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Contents

Chapter		*Page*
	Letter of transmittal	4
I.	Introduction	5
II.	Mandate of the Committee	7
III.	Organization of work	8
	A. Membership and officers	8
	B. Participation in the work of the Committee	8
IV.	Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine	9
V.	Action taken by the Committee	16
	A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/12	16
	B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 68/12 and 68/13	16
VI.	Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/14	21
VII.	Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	22

Letter of transmittal

[7 October 2014]

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 2 of its resolution 68/12 of 26 November 2013.

The report covers the period from 7 October 2013 to 6 October 2014.

(*Signed*) Fodé **Seck**
Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Chapter I
Introduction

1. At the outset, the reporting period was marked by efforts by the international community to help to advance the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, mediated by the United States of America, that had started in July 2013. The talks, however, continued to be undermined by Israel's promotion of plans and tenders for the construction of thousands of new units in illegal settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. On 28 March 2014, Israel postponed the release of the last batch of "pre-Oslo" Palestinian prisoners, breaching the United States-brokered agreement between the two sides. Soon thereafter, the Government of the State of Palestine deposited instruments of accession to the Geneva Conventions and to a number of international treaties — a step that had been postponed during the negotiations. Israel reacted with the announcement of hundreds more settlement units. On 23 April, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Hamas reached a deal to end the division that began in 2007 and form a national consensus Government. While the international community welcomed the Palestinian reconciliation, Israel rejected it and suspended the peace talks on 24 April.

2. Soon thereafter, the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, rapidly deteriorated. Israel exploited the abduction and killing on 12 June of three Israeli teenagers studying in illegal settlements in the West Bank in order to launch a massive military operation in the West Bank. Israeli occupying forces carried out hundreds of military raids, killed six Palestinian civilians, and injured and arrested hundreds of others during the operation.

3. Tensions surrounding the Gaza Strip increased in June after Israel's targeted assassination of a Palestinian militant and an accompanying child and as a result of the Israeli military operations in the West Bank. On 7 July, Israel launched "Operation Protective Edge", with the claimed objective of stopping Palestinian rocket fire from Gaza. During the 50-day operation, Israel killed 2,189 Palestinians, 67 per cent of them civilians, including 513 children and 269 women, and injured more than 11,000. Sixty-six Israeli soldiers were killed, as well as five civilians, including one foreign national. The homes of more than 100,000 Palestinians in Gaza were destroyed or severely damaged. The massive destruction worsened the living conditions of the 1.8 million people living in Gaza, which was already at a crisis point owing to the Israeli blockade, now in its eighth year. The Committee has repeatedly condemned the excessive and disproportionate use of force by Israel, the occupying Power, targeting Palestinian civilians and infrastructure and has repeatedly called for the Israeli blockade to be lifted. It has also condemned the indiscriminate rocket fire from Gaza targeting Israeli cities and civilian infrastructure.

4. Israel continued its frequent military raids and incursions in the West Bank, resulting in the killing and injuring of Palestinians, including children. Thousands of Palestinians, including women and children, were arrested during the reporting period. This is in addition to the more than 5,000 Palestinians who remain in Israeli jails and detention centres. Unarmed Palestinian civilians continued to be subjected to the excessive use of force by the Israeli occupying forces during demonstrations against the occupation. Israel continued to expand its illegal settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and approved thousands more new settlement units.

Ten years after the 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice was rendered, the construction of the separation wall and its associated regime still continue, fragmenting the Palestinian land, obstructing movement and access, further isolating East Jerusalem and harming the socioeconomic conditions of the Palestinian people. During the reporting period, the situation in occupied East Jerusalem remained alarming, with increased numbers of incursions by extremist Israelis into the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound and acts of incitement and provocation, as well as continued land confiscations, excavations near holy sites, house demolitions, revocations of identity cards and evictions of Palestinian residents.

5. Palestinian State-building and institution-building efforts continued but were undermined by restrictions and obstacles imposed by Israel on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which continued to prevent the normal movement of persons and goods, economic activity and sustained development and growth. After the State of Palestine deposited the instruments of accession in April, its accession to the Geneva Conventions took effect immediately. Seven of the nine core human rights treaties and one of the substantive protocols have entered into force.

6. During the reporting period, the activities of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and its Bureau focused on bringing the attention of the international community to the 2014 International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, as proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/12, with the objective of mobilizing wide support for ending the Israeli occupation and realizing the two-State solution, in order for the Palestinian people to achieve its inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination. The Committee monitored the situation on the ground and the political developments, implemented its programme of international meetings and conferences, and held consultations with representatives of Governments, national parliaments and interparliamentary organizations, as well as civil society. The Committee continued to reiterate its position of principle that a permanent settlement of the question of Palestine could be reached only by ending the Israeli occupation that began in 1967, achieving the independence of the State of Palestine on the basis of the pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital and achieving a just and agreed solution to the issue of Palestine refugees on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

7. An international meeting organized by the Committee in Quito in March focused on the recognition of the State of Palestine by countries in the region and support for the two-State solution. In April, the Committee held a round table in Geneva on legal aspects of the question of Palestine. This was followed by an international meeting on the question of Jerusalem, held in Ankara in May. The meeting was organized in cooperation with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Government of Turkey. A seminar on assistance to the Palestinian people, held in Nairobi, focused on solidifying the economic underpinnings of an independent State. Also, the Committee organized a series of events within the framework of the International Year, including a joint meeting with the League of Arab States in Cairo, a special meeting to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the wall, high-level briefings and film screenings at Headquarters in New York.

Chapter II
Mandate of the Committee

8. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly by its resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974. Further information is available on the website maintained by the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat at http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/com.htm.

9. On 26 November 2013, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee (resolution 68/12), requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights with the necessary resources to carry out its programme of work (resolution 68/13) and requested the continuation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat (resolution 68/14). The Assembly also adopted resolution 68/15, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine".

Chapter III
Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

10. The Committee is composed of the following Member States: Afghanistan, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cuba, Cyprus, Ecuador, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

11. The observers at the Committee meetings are: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen, as well as the State of Palestine, the African Union, the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

12. At its 357th meeting, on 16 January 2014, the Committee re-elected Abdou Salam Diallo (Senegal) as Chair, and Zahir Tanin (Afghanistan), Rodolfo Reyes Rodríguez (Cuba), Desra Percaya (Indonesia), Wilfried Emvula (Namibia) and María Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua) as Vice-Chairs, and Christopher Grima (Malta) as Rapporteur. At its 364th meeting on 3 October, the Committee elected Fodé Seck (Senegal) as the new Chair, replacing Abdou Salam Diallo, who had been assigned by his Government to another post.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

13. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members of the United Nations and observers wishing to participate in the work of the Committee were welcome to do so. In accordance with established practice, the State of Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer, attended all of its meetings, gave briefings, made observations and developed proposals for consideration by the Committee and its Bureau.

Chapter IV
Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine

Political developments

14. The Israeli-Palestinian peace talks mediated by the United States, which started in July 2013, were repeatedly thwarted by Israel's continued expansion of settlements and other illegal measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The Israeli settlement monitoring organization, Peace Now, reported that, during the nine-month period following the beginning of the talks in July 2013, the Government of Israel promoted plans for the construction of at least 13,851 housing units in settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem — an average of 50 units per day.

15. On 28 March 2014, Israel postponed the release of a fourth and final batch of 26 pre-Oslo Palestinian prisoners, which had been agreed under the United States-brokered deal that led to the restart of negotiations. On 1 April, the State of Palestine submitted accession instruments to 21 international treaties and conventions. Israel reacted with the announcement of 708 reissued tenders for illegal settlement construction in East Jerusalem on the same day. On 23 April, PLO and Hamas achieved reconciliation and agreed that a national consensus Government would be formed within five weeks and elections held no later than six months after the Government's formation. In retaliation, the following day, the Israeli Cabinet took the decision to suspend the peace negotiations.

16. On 2 June, President Abbas swore in the Government of national consensus headed by Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah. Israel publicly declared its opposition to the unity Government and reacted with the announcement of the construction of thousands of new settler homes, while the international community, including the United Nations Secretary-General and the European Union, welcomed the consensus Government and the United States expressed its readiness to work with it.

17. During his address to the General Assembly in September, President Abbas stated that the State of Palestine and the Arab Group were preparing for the introduction of a draft Security Council resolution affirming the goal of ending the Israeli occupation and achieving the two-State solution within a specified time frame.

Security

18. On 12 June, three Israeli teenagers were abducted and killed in the West Bank on their way back home to Israel from yeshivas in two illegal settlements. Israeli occupying forces launched large-scale, violent military operations throughout the West Bank, during which they killed six Palestinian civilians, including a 15-year-old boy, and arrested hundreds of others, mostly alleged members of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, including over 50 Palestinians previously released as part of the exchange deal for the Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit. Occupying forces also imposed further stringent movement restrictions, which disrupted the access by Palestinians to services, markets and workplaces, resulting in significant economic losses. On 30 June, occupying forces found the bodies of the three teenagers near Hebron. In retaliation, a group of Israelis abducted a 16-year-old Palestinian boy from East Jerusalem and burned him alive on 2 July. Widespread protests and violent clashes followed throughout East Jerusalem and spread to the West Bank, as

a result of which nearly 570 Palestinian civilians were injured by Israeli forces, including 31 by live ammunition.

19. The November 2012 ceasefire understanding between Israel and Hamas has gradually weakened since December 2013, and tensions in and around Gaza increased on 11 June, when the Israeli Air Force targeted and killed an alleged militant, along with a 10-year-old child accompanying him, in Beit Lahiya in the northern Gaza Strip. Palestinian factions responded by firing projectiles at southern Israel, to which the Israeli military responded with air strikes targeting alleged military installations in Gaza. Tensions escalated after the abduction of the three Israeli youths in the West Bank and subsequent Israeli military action.

20. On 7 July, Israel launched a large military operation in the Gaza Strip, code-named "Operation Protective Edge", with the claimed objective of stopping the Palestinian firing of rockets at southern Israel and destroying the military infrastructure of Hamas and other armed groups. Excessive aerial and navy bombardment and ground operations throughout the Gaza Strip resulted in heavy Palestinian casualties, mostly civilians. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Israeli military used 5,830 missiles in 4,028 air raids, as well as 16,507 artillery and tank projectiles and 3,494 naval shells aimed at targets in the Gaza Strip. During the offensive, 2,189 Palestinians were killed, 1,486 of them identified as civilians, including 513 children and 269 women, and 11,100 were injured, including 3,374 children, 2,088 women and 410 elderly persons. It is estimated that up to 1,000 of the injured children will have a permanent disability and up to 1,500 orphaned children will need sustained support from the child protection and welfare sectors. Over 1,000 homes were directly targeted by Israeli air strikes and 18,000 housing units were totally destroyed or severely damaged, leaving approximately 108,000 people homeless. At the height of the hostilities, an estimated 485,000 people, 28 per cent of the population of Gaza, were internally displaced, including 290,000 who took shelter in schools administered by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). On three occasions, Israeli occupying forces directly hit UNRWA schools, with full knowledge that they were being used as shelters for displaced persons, killing 45 Palestinians, including 17 children, and injuring 317. An estimated 118 UNRWA installations sustained damage.

21. During the Israeli offensive, 1 hospital and 7 clinics were totally destroyed and 16 hospitals and 51 clinics were damaged. Fourteen ambulances were completely destroyed and 33 others were partially damaged. The majority of the Gaza population has lost its productive assets: 419 businesses and workshops were damaged, with 128 completely destroyed, further decimating the economy and resulting in the unemployment of another 30,000 people. Israeli attacks also caused substantial direct damage to Gaza's 17,000 hectares of cropland as well as much of its agricultural infrastructure. As at late August, around 7,000 unexploded ordnance were estimated to be present, threatening the lives of both civilians and humanitarian workers. As at 6 October, the ceasefire agreed on 26 August largely continued to hold. The Gaza power plant damaged in an Israeli air strike on 29 July remained inoperable and electricity outages of 18 hours a day continued in most areas across Gaza. The Government of the State of Palestine estimated that rebuilding Gaza would cost $7.8 billion.

22. Human rights organizations have expressed serious concerns regarding incidents where civilians or civilian objects were directly hit by Israeli air strikes, in circumstances where there was allegedly no rocket fire or armed group activity in the close vicinity. Human Rights Watch reported several incidents in which Israeli soldiers opened fire on fleeing civilians. Amnesty International reported that there was mounting evidence that Israel had launched apparently deliberate attacks against hospitals and health professionals, which left six medics dead. On 23 July, the Human Rights Council adopted a resolution addressing the crisis and deciding, inter alia, to dispatch an independent, international commission of inquiry to investigate all violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in particular in Gaza, since 13 June (resolution S-21/1).

23. On the Israeli side, 66 soldiers, one security coordinator, four civilians, including a four-year-old, and one foreign national were killed, and some 130 civilians were injured during the Gaza operation. Palestinian armed groups reportedly fired 4,844 rockets and 1,734 mortars at Israel.

24. Prior to 7 July, Israeli forces killed 22 Palestinians and injured more than 200 in the Gaza Strip during the reporting period in incidents involving air strikes and live fire at Palestinians near the border fence. One Israeli repairing the fence between Gaza and Israel was killed by a Palestinian sniper. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Israeli occupying forces killed 53 Palestinians and injured more than 4,800 during the reporting period (as at 29 September), including during clashes with demonstrators. Five Israeli civilians were killed by Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Settlements

25. Israel, the occupying Power, continued and intensified its illegal settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, which further diminished the viability of the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders. On 3 March, the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics stated that construction in the settlements had more than doubled in 2013 compared with 2012, from 1,133 to 2,534 housing units.

26. During the reporting period, the following were announced, approved, advanced or issued by Israel, or disclosed by watchdog/media organizations: the construction of 860 housing units in the "Ariel", "Ma'aleh Adumim", "Givat Ze'ev", "Betar Ilit", "Karnei Shomron" and "Elkana" settlements and 2,500 other new units throughout the West Bank (31 October); tenders for 283 units in "Elkana", 114 in "Ma'aleh Adumim", 196 in "Karnei Shomron", 102 in "Givat Zeev", 18 in "Ariel", 80 in "Adam" and 238 in "Betar Illit" (3 November); plans to build 19,786 units in the West Bank (12 November); the construction of 829 new settler homes in the West Bank (25 November); plans for 250 units in "Ofra" and 22 in "Karnei Shomron" (5 January 2014); the construction of 801 units in the West Bank (10 January); plans to build 381 homes in "Givat Ze'ev" (21 January); plans for 256 units in "Nofei Prat" and 5 in "Ariel" (22 January); tenders for 900 units in the West Bank (4 June); the unfreezing of planning processes for 1,800 units that had been suspended (5 June); plans for 1,083 settler homes in the West Bank as part of its response to the newly formed Palestinian unity Government (week of 13 June); tenders for 283 new homes for "Elkana" (5 September). On 13 April, the Government of Israel retroactively approved measures for "legalizing" a settlement outpost at "Gush Etzion", appropriating private Palestinian land. On 31 August,

Israel declared four square kilometres of land west of Bethlehem as State land, unprecedented in its scope since the 1980's.

27. In Occupied East Jerusalem, the following were announced, approved, advanced or issued by Israel, or disclosed by watchdog/media organizations: the building of 58 housing units in the "Pisgat Ze'ev" settlement in East Jerusalem (9 October); plans for the construction of 80 units in "Har Homa" (10 October); the construction of 1,500 units in "Ramat Shlomo" (30 October); tenders for 311 units in "Gilo", 387 in "Ramat Shlomo" and 130 in "Har Homa" (3 November); 397 units in "Gilo" (4 November); plans to build 4,000 units in the City (12 November); the construction of 1,076 units in the City (10 January 2014); the construction of 1,800 units in "Armon" (28 January); the construction of 558 homes in "Har Homa", "Neve Yaakov" and "Pisgat Ze'ev" (5 February); the construction of a yeshiva in Sheikh Jarrah (12 February); the construction of 184 units in the City (19 March); tenders for 708 units in "Gilo" (1 April); the construction of 50 units "Har Homa" (26 May); a plan to build a "national park" on the land of the villages of Al-Issawiya and Al-Tur (27 May); tenders for 560 units in the City (4 June); the construction of 172 apartments in "Har Homa" (18 June); a plan featuring 2,200 housing units and 130 hectares for infrastructure in the Jabel Mukaber neighbourhood (3 September); and a plan to build 2,610 units in "Givat Hamatos" (24 September).

Settler-related incidents

28. Settler-related incidents in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, including acts of terror, provocation and destruction by settlers, continued to be a source of serious concern. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as at August 2014, there had been at least 92 incidents leading to Palestinian casualties and 155 incidents leading to damage to Palestinian property or land during the reporting period. In 2013, 10,142 trees were reported burned, uprooted, or otherwise vandalized, including in areas adjacent to settlements, compared with 8,259 trees in 2012.

Jerusalem

29. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 35 per cent of the land in occupied East Jerusalem has been confiscated for Israeli settlement use, and only 13 per cent of East Jerusalem is zoned for Palestinian construction, much of which is already built-up. At least a third of all Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem lack Israeli-issued building permits, which are difficult to obtain, potentially placing over 90,000 residents at risk of displacement, which has a negative socioeconomic and psychological impact on the Palestinian residents of the City. Since 1967, the Israeli authorities have demolished some 2,000 houses in East Jerusalem. Several hundred Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem are also at risk of forced displacement owing to settler activities, in particular in the Old City, Silwan and Sheikh Jarrah.

30. Tensions were heightened by increasing numbers of incursions by Israeli extremists and political leaders, including Government officials, into the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound. Those provocations led to clashes with Palestinian worshippers, in which some were injured, tear-gassed and detained. On 25 February, the Knesset held a debate regarding attempts to impose Israeli sovereignty on Al-Haram Al-Sharif.

Demolitions and displacements

31. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as at 29 September, Israel had carried out the demolition of at least 515 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C in the West Bank and 61 in East Jerusalem during the reporting period, displacing at least 975 and 164 Palestinians, respectively. On 1 July, the Israeli High Court of Justice sanctioned the punitive demolition of parts of the house of the family of a Palestinian from Hebron suspected of killing an Israeli policeman in April 2014.

Water

32. According to a report issued by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in March 2014, groundwater in Gaza is being drawn at a higher rate than natural replenishment, and sea water from the Mediterranean has infiltrated the groundwater, raising the salinity to unsafe levels. Sewage and agricultural fertilizer infiltration have also contributed to water contamination with high levels of chloride and nitrates, in some areas as high as six times the World Health Organization (WHO) limit. More than 90 per cent of the water extracted from the territory's sole aquifer has been found to be unsafe for human consumption. Over-abstraction of groundwater could render the aquifer unusable by 2016. Since the tap water is often saline and undrinkable, more than four out of five Gazans buy their drinking water from unregulated, private vendors, a heavy burden on already impoverished families. Some families are spending as much as a third of their household income on water. An estimated four fifths of the water sold by private vendors is contaminated.

33. According to the Palestinian Water Authority, the water distribution network in Gaza suffered $34.4 million in damage as a result of the Israeli military offensive in July and August 2014: 11 water wells were completely destroyed and 15 partially destroyed; 17 kilometres of water supply networks were completely destroyed; two desalination units were completely destroyed and four partially damaged; 12 pumping sewage stations were severely damaged and 4 wastewater treatment stations partially destroyed.

34. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in the West Bank, more than 70 per cent of the Palestinian communities located entirely or mostly in Area C are not connected to the water network and rely on tankered water at a vastly increased cost, and water consumption in some of these communities is as low as 20 litres per capita per day, one fifth of the WHO recommendation.

Women and children

35. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) reported in August 2014 that the reproductive and maternal health situation in Gaza remained desperate. It estimated that nearly 46,000 women in Gaza were pregnant at the time of the Israeli military aggression, with 10,000 of them displaced as a result of the Israeli offensive. Maternity clinics were closed, as were a number of private maternity centres. Other facilities were overstrained and, in some, maternity beds were being used for the wounded. Shifa Hospital reported a 15 to 20 per cent increase in premature births, which were linked to the stress of the bombardments. Also, home deliveries were reportedly on the rise, increasing the risks for women and their babies.

36. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, at least 219 schools (141 Government and 75 UNRWA) in Gaza were damaged during the Israeli offensive, 22 of them so severely that they can no longer be used. Among those still standing, 103 were turned into collective shelters for some 330,000 displaced people, half of them children. Nearly 500,000 children could not return to school on 24 August, when the new academic year started. At least 373,000 children require direct and specialized psychological support. Children are showing symptoms of increasing distress, including bed-wetting, clinging to parents and nightmares. The education sector was already in crisis prior to the start of the Israeli operation, suffering from a shortage of almost 200 schools, with nearly 80 per cent of classes running double shifts to deal with the high number of students.

37. In East Jerusalem, there is also a chronic shortage of classrooms: 2,200 additional classrooms are required to accommodate Palestinian children, and many existing facilities are substandard or unsuitable.

Prisoners

38. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and the Palestinian Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs reported in April that since 1967, Israel had arrested more than 805,000 Palestinians and 205 Palestinians had died in Israeli jails as a result of torture, denial of medical treatment or deliberate killing. According to the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem, at the end of August, 5,505 Palestinian security detainees and prisoners were being held in Israeli prisons, including 473 administrative detainees and 201 minors. On 9 June, the Knesset gave initial approval to a law allowing force-feeding of Palestinian prisoners on hunger strike. On 24 June, 63 Palestinian prisoners agreed to suspend their two-month-old hunger strike in protest against Israel's use of administrative detention without charge or trial after reaching a deal with the Israeli authorities according to which their conditions were to be improved.

Palestinian State-building

39. On 2 April, the State of Palestine deposited its instruments of accession to the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 as well as a number of international treaties. The accession by the State of Palestine to the Geneva Conventions took effect immediately, and the following core human rights treaties and protocol have entered into force: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; Convention on the Rights of the Child; Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

40. In a report issued in September, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) stated that economic growth in the Occupied Palestinian Territory had declined from an average of about 11 per cent in 2010 and 2011 to a mere 1.5 per cent in 2013, the lowest rate since 2006, owing to the severe effects of the Israeli restrictions on the movement of Palestinian people and goods, pervasive uncertainty, the persistent fiscal crisis and gloomy economic horizons.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

41. UNRWA continued to experience a grave and recurrent financial crisis, which threatened its ability to sustain its services, continue its emergency assistance programmes and complete essential projects. In the light of the escalating conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, the Agency expressed particular concern about the more than 500,000 Palestine refugees who have lived in the country for decades. As at August, over 270,000 Palestine refugees were displaced within the Syrian Arab Republic, 53,070 in Lebanon and over 13,836 in Jordan. Some 65,000 Palestine refugees were in besieged areas, including 18,000 in Yarmouk, to which UNRWA has had only limited access since July 2013. A recent survey revealed that over 54,000 Palestinian refugee homes in the Syrian Arab Republic had been destroyed or damaged.

42. Prior to June, approximately 800,000 people in the Gaza Strip — almost half of the population — were receiving quarterly food aid rations from UNRWA. After the launch of the Israeli military operation, dozens of UNRWA schools were turned into shelters for hundreds of thousands of displaced people, and emergency food distribution was required to meet the needs of 1.2 million people. Eleven UNRWA staff members were killed in the line of duty during the Israeli offensive. In addition, thousands of refugee homes were destroyed by the occupying forces. The devastating conflict will have severe implications for the Agency's future work in Gaza.

43. The Committee again expresses its appreciation for the dedication of UNRWA and its entire staff to its mission and calls upon all donors to increase contributions to the Agency, in particular in the light of prevailing crises and needs, to ensure the continuity of needed services and the well-being of approximately 5 million registered Palestine refugees under the mandate of the Agency.

United Nations Development Programme/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

44. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through its Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, continued to respond to the development needs in the State of Palestine. In support of the Palestinian Statehood agenda, UNDP proceeded with the implementation of a three-year plan focusing on democratic governance and the rule of law, economic empowerment and private sector investment, environment and management of natural resources, as well as public and social infrastructure. UNDP will also be responding to the destruction wrought by the Israeli military attacks in the Gaza Strip by enhancing livelihoods through emergency employment and leading early recovery activities to alleviate the suffering of the Gaza population, in spite of the blockade. UNDP continued to place empowerment, resilience and sustainability at the centre of its operation and focus on three priority areas: the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and Area C, where the needs are the greatest.

45. The Committee also remained appreciative of the important work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Committee calls upon all donors to increase contributions to the funding requirements of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in particular to the Gaza Crisis Appeal.

Chapter V
Action taken by the Committee

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/12

1. Action taken in the Security Council

46. During the open debates at the Security Council held on 22 October 2013, 20 January, 29 April and 22 July 2014, the Chair of the Committee delivered statements (see S/PV.7047; S/PV.7096, Resumption 1; S/PV.7164; S/PV.7222).

2. Action taken by the Bureau of the Committee

47. On 7 November 2013, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement on Israel's illegal settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem (GA/PAL/1278). On 10 December, it issued a statement on the passing of Nelson Mandela (GA/PAL/1283). On 20 January 2014, the Bureau issued a statement on the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Yarmouk refugee camp in the Syrian Arab Republic (GA/PAL/1286). On 5 March, it issued a statement on increased tensions in Occupied East Jerusalem (GA/PAL/1287). On 4 June, the Bureau issued a statement welcoming the formation of the Palestinian national consensus Government (GA/PAL/1300). On 27 June, it issued a statement on Israel's massive military onslaught on the Palestinian civilian population in the West Bank (GA/PAL/1302). On 11 and 21 July, the Bureau issued statements condemning the Israeli military aggression in the Gaza Strip (GA/PAL/1310 and 1311).

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 68/12 and 68/13

1. Committee meetings at Headquarters

48. In its resolution 68/12 of 26 November 2013, the General Assembly proclaimed 2014 the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and requested the Committee to organize related activities in cooperation with Governments, United Nations organizations, intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations. In addition to its periodic meetings, the Committee organized the following events within the framework of the International Year:

(a) Screening of the documentary film *Where Should the Birds Fly?*, followed by a discussion, 20 January;

(b) Screening of the Academy Award-nominated documentary film *5 Broken Cameras*, followed by a discussion, 19 February;

(c) Briefing by a representative of Defence for Children International Palestine, 24 February;

(d) Screening of the Academy Award-nominated film *Omar*, followed by a discussion, 1 May;

(e) Screening of *Flying Paper*, a documentary on Palestinian youth in Gaza, followed by a briefing by the UNRWA Director of Operations in Gaza, Robert Turner, and a discussion with the director of the film, 21 May;

(f) Special Meeting of the Committee to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, 9 July (a Committee statement was adopted at the meeting);

(g) Briefing by Hanan Ashrawi, member of the PLO Executive Committee, 2 September.

2. Committee meeting away from Headquarters

49. On 10 March, the Committee held a joint meeting with the League of Arab States at its headquarters in Cairo aimed at reinforcing the critical support of all Arab States for the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. A joint declaration was adopted at the end of the meeting.

3. Programme of international meetings and conferences

50. The following international events were held under the auspices of the Committee in 2014:

(a) United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine, Quito, 25 and 26 March;

(b) United Nations Meeting of Civil Society in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace: Engaging civil society in Latin America and the Caribbean for the two-State solution, Quito, 27 March;

(c) United Nations Round Table on Legal Aspects of the Question of Palestine, United Nations Office at Geneva, 24 and 25 April;

(d) International Meeting on the Question of Jerusalem, jointly organized with OIC and the Government of Turkey, Ankara, 12 and 13 May;

(e) Public Forum on the Question of Jerusalem, organized in cooperation with the Centre for Middle Eastern and Strategic Studies, Ankara, 14 May;

(f) United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, United Nations Office at Nairobi, 1 and 2 July.

51. The above-mentioned events were attended by representatives of Governments, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations system entities, as well as parliamentarians and representatives of civil society and the media. Detailed information about the meetings is being issued in publications of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat and is available on the "Question of Palestine" website maintained by the Division.

52. On the margins of the United Nations International Meeting in Quito, the Committee delegation met with Ricardo Patiño Aroca, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility of Ecuador, and other senior officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On the margins of the United Nations Round Table in Geneva, the Committee delegation held meetings with senior officials of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNCTAD and the International

Committee of the Red Cross. While in Geneva, the delegation also met with the Director-General of the World Health Organization and the Acting Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. In Ankara, on the margins of the International Meeting, the Committee delegation met with Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey, and other senior officials at the Ministry, as well as with representatives of OIC, including Secretary General Iyad bin Amin Madani.

4. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations

53. Throughout the year, the Committee continued its cooperation with the African Union, the European Union, the League of Arab States, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and OIC. The Committee is appreciative of the active participation of their representatives in the various international events held under its auspices.

5. Cooperation with civil society

Civil society organizations

54. The Committee continued its cooperation with civil society organizations worldwide, which was bolstered by the proclamation of 2014 as the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Civil society representatives participated in all meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee. The Committee commends the important work of civil society organizations and encourages them to continue contributing to efforts aimed at attaining a comprehensive, just, lasting and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine in all its aspects and achieving the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

55. The Committee maintained its cooperation with national, regional and international coordinating mechanisms and established new liaisons with a large number of individual organizations. Moreover, at the United Nations Round Table on Legal Aspects of the Question of Palestine held in Geneva, eight Palestinian human rights organizations took part in the deliberations with leading legal experts. While in Quito in March and in Ankara in May, the Committee organized joint events with local universities.

56. The Working Group of the Committee, chaired by the representative of Malta, met periodically and hosted three briefings by civil society representatives and the above-mentioned four film screenings at Headquarters.

57. During the reporting period, 12 civil society organizations were accredited to the Committee and 2 organizations became observers.

58. The Division for Palestinian Rights maintained a civil society page (http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/ngo.htm) on the "Question of Palestine" website and developed the United Nations Platform for Palestine website (http://unpfp.un.org) as a tool for outreach to civil society organizations and to foster civil society networking and cooperation.

59. The Division maintained its Facebook and YouTube pages as well as Twitter feeds to disseminate information about the work of the Committee, and the United Nations as a whole, on the question of Palestine. In addition, the Division continued to publish the periodic online bulletin *NGO Action News*, reaching out to more than

1,000 civil society organizations around the world, in order to catalogue and publicize civil society initiatives.

Parliaments and interparliamentary organizations

60. The Committee continued to attach great importance to developing its liaison with national and regional parliaments and their organizations. Representatives of parliaments and interparliamentary organizations participated in international events organized by the Committee during 2014. In particular, a member of the Israeli Knesset and the Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean participated as speakers in the International Meeting on the Question of Jerusalem, held in Ankara. Moreover, in Quito, the Committee delegation met with the Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly of Ecuador. In Geneva, the Committee delegation held meetings with senior officials of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and, in New York, the Chair of the Committee met in December with a delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean headed by its President.

6. Research, monitoring and publications

61. The Division carried out research and monitoring activities and responded to requests for information and briefings on the question of Palestine. Under the guidance of the Committee, which reiterated the relevance of the research, monitoring and publications programme, it also prepared the publications listed below for dissemination:

(a) Monthly bulletin on action taken by the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine;

(b) Monthly chronology of events relating to the question of Palestine based on media reports and other sources;

(c) Reports of international meetings and conferences organized under the auspices of the Committee;

(d) Special bulletin and information notes on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;

(e) Periodic reviews of developments related to the Middle East peace process;

(f) Annual compilation of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine;

(g) Study entitled "Origins and Evolution of the Palestine Problem, Part V (1989-2000)".

7. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

62. The Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant technical and library services of the United Nations Secretariat, continued to administer, maintain, expand and develop the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine and the "Question of Palestine" website (http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/home.htm). That included the ongoing maintenance and upgrading of the technical components of the system and involved the expansion of the document

collection to include relevant new and old United Nations and other documents. RSS and Twitter feeds continued to alert users about newly posted materials.

8. Training programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine

63. The Division conducted the annual training programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine. One staff member of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs participated in a three-week training programme at the United Nations Office at Geneva during the sixty-first session of the UNCTAD Trade and Development Board, which started on 15 September 2014. In addition, three staff members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are in the process of completing a 70-day training programme at Headquarters in New York, from 9 September to 27 November 2014, in order to familiarize themselves with various aspects of the work of the Secretariat and other United Nations organs and bodies, including the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. Training was also provided for five staff members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who were attending the Geneva Round Table on Legal Aspects of the Question of Palestine, and for one staff member participating in the nineteenth Rhodes Academy of Oceans Law and Policy training programme at Rhodes, Greece, in July 2014.

9. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

64. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 25 November 2013 at Headquarters in New York and on 29 November at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. At Headquarters, the Committee organized a special meeting, as well as a concert featuring Nai Barghouti and her troupe and Mohammed Assaf, UNRWA Regional Youth Ambassador and 2013 winner of the Arab Idol contest, in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations and the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day of Solidarity had also been observed by United Nations information centres and other bodies in many cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/14

65. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/14, the Department of Public Information continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine.

66. During the reporting period, two United Nations International Media Seminars on Peace in the Middle East were organized by the Department. The first was held in Istanbul, Turkey, on 8 and 9 October 2013, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey. The second, arranged in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, was held in Tokyo on 9 and 10 June 2014. The seminars were attended by journalists, bloggers, activists and representatives of civil society, current and former policymakers, academics and senior United Nations officials.

67. The Department's five-week annual training programme for Palestinian journalists was organized in New York and Washington, D.C. from 4 November to 6 December 2013. The selected group of eight Palestinian journalists participated in a series of briefings by United Nations officials and media industry leaders. They also worked through an intensive online journalism curriculum with regular workshops, assignments and a final project.

68. The Department continued to use all its platforms, including multimedia. to highlight the broad range of developments and issues related to the question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process.

69. The declaration of 2014 as the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was prominently covered by all the Department's communications platforms, including social media channels. The Department developed an online portal dedicated to the Year in the six official languages and co-organized, with the Division for Palestinian Rights, screenings of two Academy Award-nominated Palestinian films at Headquarters.

70. United Nations information centres and services publicized the observance of the International Day and Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in the media and widely disseminated information materials in official and non-official languages. Commemoration activities organized by the information centres included a series of outreach activities, such as cultural events, quizzes, exhibits, screenings and panel discussions. The United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe (located in Brussels) and UNRWA, in association with several Belgian civil society groups, organized the "Yalla Palestina" festival in May. About 5,000 people attended the event. The information centre in Jakarta launched the monthly e-newsletter *Halo Palestine* in Indonesian.

71. The Department continued to maintain its tour route at United Nations Headquarters, which includes a stop at the permanent exhibit "The question of Palestine and the United Nations". During the reporting period, approximately 138,000 visitors took the guided tour. In addition, a total of 132 scholars and students were briefed on the question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process.

Chapter VII
Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

72. **During the reporting period, the Committee intensified its work, in implementation of its mandate contained in General Assembly resolution 68/12, to organize activities in 2014 for the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Operating within existing regular budget resources and with support from its partners, including the Arab League and OIC, the Committee was able to convene additional events throughout the year, in addition to its regular meetings and conferences. The Committee wishes to express its deep appreciation to its partners who contributed extrabudgetary resources, logistical and substantive support, and its gratitude for their active participation in these events, which made them a success. The Committee wishes to thank its members and observers who organized solidarity events during the International Year at the national level and encourages them to continue such activities. To sustain the momentum generated by the International Year, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly make provisions for follow-up activities by the Committee in 2015 and thereafter, in order to review key challenges and the progress being made by the Palestinian people towards the realization of their inalienable rights and long-denied freedom, justice and peace.**

73. **The Committee is convinced that a negotiated peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in all its aspects, in accordance with United Nations resolutions, and an urgent end to the Israeli occupation remain central to peace and stability throughout the volatile Middle East region and should be a top priority of the international community. The recent tragic events in Gaza, which has undergone three devastating Israeli military assaults in six years, reinforce this view. The ceasefire should be solidified and the root causes of the crisis fully addressed, including a lifting of the illegal blockade on Gaza.**

74. **The Committee notes with appreciation the emergence of an international consensus that there should not be a return to the status quo ante in Gaza. The cycle of war and rebuilding should end. The establishment of the national consensus Government, which the Committee strongly supported, provides a window of opportunity to stabilize Gaza. All States Members of the United Nations should support the administration of Gaza by the Palestinian national consensus Government under the leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas, which should in turn consolidate and unify the administrative and security apparatuses under its command. National elections should be held according to schedule. Gaza crossings should be open to the legitimate and sustained flow of persons and goods, including construction materials, humanitarian aid and commercial flows, with support from the European Union border assistance mission and in accordance with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) and the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access. Exports from Gaza to the West Bank, Israel and the outside world should be allowed to resume, enabling the legitimate economy to rebuild. Long-dormant projects such as the Gaza airport and seaport, a safe passage route to the West Bank and offshore gas fields should be revitalized. The normalization in Gaza would significantly reduce tensions and facilitate the resumption of the political process.**

75. **The tragic events in Gaza underscore the urgency of reaching a peaceful settlement to the question of Palestine as a whole. The Committee supported the efforts spearheaded by the United States to reach a final status agreement between the parties by April of 2014. The Committee sought to contribute to peace efforts as it urged the international community to step up its support of negotiations, while promoting international action against obstacles in their path, such as the illegal Israeli settlements and the wall; drew international attention to key permanent status issues; examined legal options available to the State of Palestine; urged solidarity with the Palestinian people and their State; and engaged with diverse constituencies in support of peace. It continued to mobilize international support for the Palestinian National Development Plan, while highlighting the massive economic costs of the Israeli occupation. It urged increased donor support for the Government of the State of Palestine and United Nations agencies providing vital humanitarian support on the ground, as well as for the effective use of international assistance for sustainable growth.**

76. **The latest round of negotiations regrettably failed, as did previous such efforts in 2000-2001 and 2007-2008, in large part owing to the acceleration of Israel's illegal settlement campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and its failure to honour the agreement to release Palestinian prisoners. The Committee observes that, in each case, the failure of negotiations was followed by an outbreak of violence. The repeated failure to reach agreement, despite the stepped-up engagement by the international community, also reflects the limitations of the traditional format of bilateral Israeli-Palestinian final status talks facilitated by a single Member State. In that regard, the Committee would welcome proposals for innovative approaches and formats that could help to break the deadlock and accelerate the end of the 47-year Israeli military occupation and the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, in particular their right to an independent and sovereign Palestinian State based on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, and their right to return. The Committee recalls in that regard that the Quartet road map endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 1515 (2003) envisages the creation of a Palestinian State prior to the conclusion of negotiations on permanent status issues. The Committee urges the Security Council and the General Assembly to give positive consideration to all such proposals and intends to contribute to a healthy and necessary discussion of the issues through its programme of conferences and international meetings.**

77. **The Committee considers that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility in respect of the question of Palestine, as well as a responsibility to protect the Palestinian civilian population in accordance with international humanitarian law. However, large protection gaps have been exposed, both in Gaza and in the West Bank. The Committee welcomes the fact-finding mission established by the Human Rights Council as an important step towards accountability for violations of humanitarian and human rights law. There is no justification for the targeting of innocent civilians and there should be no impunity for its perpetrators. The Committee welcomes the request by the Palestinian leadership addressed to the Secretary-General that the territory of the occupied State of Palestine be placed under an international protection system by the United Nations. The Committee calls upon the Secretary-General**

to expedite the review of that request and to submit his recommendations to the Security Council and the General Assembly as appropriate. The Committee expresses its readiness to contribute to the consideration of proposals in the relevant forums. The Committee calls upon the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly to also take practical steps to follow up on the findings of previous fact-finding missions.

78. The Committee welcomes the accession by the State of Palestine to a number of international conventions and treaties and encourages its Government to take all steps towards full compliance with those instruments, subject to the constraints imposed by the Israeli occupation. The Committee encourages the signature by the State of Palestine of additional international instruments, which would allow it to pursue justice and accountability for Palestinian victims through the available international legal mechanisms. The Committee stands ready to contribute to Palestinian capacity-building in that area through its training programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine. The Committee is ready to organize further round tables to raise awareness among Palestinian policymakers regarding the legal options available under the status of non-Member observer State.

79. The Committee underscores the responsibility of States and private entities not to contribute to grave Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights, in particular in respect of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. It welcomes in that regard the entry into force of European Union guidelines that prohibit funding by European Union institutions for Israeli entities connected with settlements and the importation of settlement agricultural produce. It welcomes further steps taken by Governments and private businesses to dissociate themselves from settlements.

80. The scale of the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Gaza is unprecedented. Clean water, sanitation and electricity remain scarce, with vast networks having been destroyed by the Israeli aggression, while hundreds of thousands of Palestinians remain homeless and destitute, since their houses were destroyed or rendered uninhabitable by the Israeli bombardments. The Committee calls upon the United Nations members and observers to provide generous support to UNRWA, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNICEF, the World Food Programme (WFP), UNDP and other organizations working on the ground to alleviate the catastrophic conditions in Gaza and to expedite the massive rebuilding effort that is vital.

81. The year 2014 marks the tenth anniversary of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which determined that the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory built by Israel, the occupying Power, is contrary to international law. The Court called upon the United Nations, and especially the General Assembly and the Security Council, to consider further action to bring an end to that illegal situation. As the work of the Register of Damage caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, established by the General Assembly, nears completion, the Committee invites the Assembly to consider further steps to redress the illegal situation.

82. The Committee has consistently supported the Palestinian State-building and reform agenda. It is concerned that the accomplishments are now endangered owing to the chronic political, security and financial crises and calls

upon donors to meet their prior commitments and to provide additional aid to avert further deterioration. The Committee remains convinced, however, that sustainable economic development cannot take root under the existing regime of Israeli occupation, which exacts annual costs of an estimated $7 billion, borne by the Palestinian economy, in particular in Gaza and in Area C of the West Bank. In that regard, the Committee calls upon the General Assembly to establish provisions for a mechanism that would allow the United Nations to document those costs. Moreover, unequal economic arrangements resulting from the Oslo Accords need to be revisited by the parties to allow the Palestinian economy to develop.

83. The Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights will continue through their mandated activities to generate heightened international awareness of the question of Palestine, as well as international support for the rights of the Palestinian people and the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. In that connection, the Committee emphasizes the useful and constructive contribution of the Division in support of its mandate. It notes with satisfaction: (a) the sustained level of dialogue, engagement and support on the part of the international community for the programme's objectives, as evidenced by the number of international meetings and conferences and commemorations of the International Day and Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People; (b) the continued involvement of civil society organizations in support of the efforts of the Committee and the United Nations towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine; and (c) an increase in international awareness of the United Nations policies and activities on the question of Palestine, as evidenced by the increased number of followers of social media sites maintained by the Division. The Committee also considers that the annual training programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine, carried out annually by the Division, has proved its usefulness, as it directly contributes to Palestinian capacity-building efforts. The Committee strongly recommends that this important mandated activity be continued and, where possible, further enhanced.

84. The Committee will focus its programme of international meetings and conferences in 2015, to be implemented by the Division, on widening international support for the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The Committee intends to mobilize increased international scrutiny of the developments on the ground, in particular settlement activities, and will emphasize responsibility and promote action by the international community to put an end to all illegal Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the meantime, to promote accountability for Israeli violations and the needed protection for the Palestinian people. The Committee will also continue to examine the legal ramifications of the new international status of the State of Palestine and will continue to call attention to the plight of the Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli jails and urge a resolution of their plight. The Committee will strive to involve prominent international personalities and experts and the representatives of vulnerable populations, such as women and refugees, in its events, while giving due regard to gender balance.

85. The Committee will continue to invite internationally renowned personalities to brief the Committee and the wider United Nations membership.

The Committee also considers that round-table meetings have proved particularly useful in generating practical proposals for action in the United Nations and beyond and will continue to utilize that format.

86. **The Committee will continue to mobilize support for Palestinian institution-building and all other efforts to support and enhance the viability of the State of Palestine. It will reach out to and engage Governments, parliamentarians and civil society to mobilize support for a just solution to all permanent status issues, including the question of refugees, based on principles of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolution 194 (III). It will pay particular attention to the inclusion and empowerment of women and youth and their organizations.**

87. **The Committee highly values civil society initiatives in support of the Palestinian people. A comprehensive peace will take root only if the relevant civil societies strongly demand it of their political leaderships. Special efforts are needed to revitalize the peace camp in Israel. The Committee lauds the courageous advocacy actions of countless activists, including eminent personalities and parliamentarians, who participate in demonstrations against the occupation and keep their home constituencies informed about the harsh realities of life under occupation. The Committee encourages civil society partners to work with their national Governments, parliamentarians and other institutions with a view to gaining their full support for the work of the United Nations, including that of the Committee, on the question of Palestine. The Committee encourages its members and observers to mobilize their respective civil societies at the national level, in particular young people, and to establish solidarity committees with the State of Palestine.**

88. **The Committee looks forward to further developing its cooperation with parliamentarians and their umbrella organizations. Parliamentarians have a special responsibility to ensure that their Governments actively promote and support the realization of a peaceful and just solution to the question of Palestine and uphold their obligations under international law, including humanitarian and human rights law. The Committee will reach out to new audiences such as local Governments, which have an important role to play in promoting local economic development and other initiatives at the decentralized level.**

89. **The Committee will reach out to all regional groups at the United Nations, with a view to expanding its membership. It will actively work to organize more thematic debates on the question of Palestine in various United Nations forums. Recognizing the growing importance of developing countries and regional and subregional organizations, it will make a special effort to step up engagement with those countries and organizations in its work.**

90. **The Committee requests the Division to continue its substantive and secretariat support, the programme of research, monitoring and publications and other informational activities, in support of the Committee's communication strategy. The Division should pay special attention to continued development of the "Question of Palestine" portal, including the addition of a mobile-device-friendly version, and the use of web-based social information networks, such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. It should also continue to develop the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine**

document collection by reflecting current issues and events, as well as by continuing to digitize and upload historical documents and to add user-friendly search features. The Division should continue to collaborate with the United Nations libraries at Headquarters and at Geneva in the search for historic documents. It should further enhance the annual training programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine, paying special attention to the programme's gender balance, and optimize the use of resources to allow the maximum number of participants possible. Voluntary contributions from members and observers in line with their capacity are to be encouraged to put the programme on a solid financial footing.

91. **The Division should continue to organize the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.**

92. **The Committee is of the view that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has made an important contribution to informing the media and the public of the relevant issues. It requests the continuation of the programme, with the necessary flexibility warranted by developments relevant to the question of Palestine.**

93. **Wishing to make its contribution to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, and in view of the many difficulties facing the Palestinian people and their leadership and besetting the peace process, the Committee calls upon all States to join it in this endeavour and to extend their cooperation and support to the Committee, and invites the General Assembly again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate.**

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